

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware
June 20, 2022

The President. Hey, guys. Whoa, whoa, whoa, let me take a few questions, and then let me walk with my family, okay?

I'm feeling great. I'm feeling great. What happened was—do any of you guys ride bikes? Well, they have—some of them have these things you put your toe in. It restrains your foot so it doesn't slide off the pedal. When I was getting off the bike, it got stuck on the right side. I fell, in case you didn't notice. *[Laughter]*

Q. But it's good that you're okay.

The President. I was fine. *[Laughter]*

Ukraine/The President's Travel Plans

Q. Mr. President, are you still planning to go to Ukraine?

The President. That depends.

Q. On what?

The President. On a lot of things relating to whether or not it causes more difficulty for Ukrainians, whether it distracts from what's going on. But I've been meeting with Zelenskyy, and I've talked with him almost—well, at least three or four times a week.

And—but I'll be heading—I'm going into Germany; then I'm going to Spain. Then, I'm going to Israel. Then, I'm going into Saudi Arabia for a larger meeting of a community there. And then, I'll be coming home, probably directly.

Q. So not going to Ukraine on the trip?

The President. Well, on this trip, not likely.

Federal Gasoline Tax

Q. Mr. President, are you considering a pause on the Federal gas tax? Mr. President, we know that you're considering it, and Secretary Yellen spoke about it yesterday.

The President. Yes, I'm considering it.

Q. How soon can we expect a decision?

The President. Well, I hope I have a decision, based on data I'm looking for, by the end of the week.

Q. Will you be sending Americans gas tax cards, gas rebate cards?

The President. Well, that's part of what we consider, that's part of the whole operation. And I'm just not in a position to answer that right now.

[At this point, the President coughed.]

Excuse me.

Student Loan Debt Relief

Q. Are you close to making a decision on student debt?

The President. Yes.

Q. Would you extend the pause for a couple months at all? Or is that on the table? Or——

The President. It's all on the table right now.

Apple Inc. Employee Unionization Efforts

Q. And, Mr. President, Apple store workers formed their first union. This is the first time this has happened in the company. You're obviously a big supporter of collective bargaining. I mean, do you have any thoughts on that?

The President. I think that—I'm proud of them. Look, you know, workers have a right to determine under what conditions they're going to work or not work.

And I think that—I think the thing that everybody kind of misunderstands about unions—they tend to be, especially in the trades, the best workers in the world. They go to the equivalent of 4 years of college. [*Laughter*] They have 4 years of apprenticeship, and they break their neck. They get paid partially while they're going, but they get paid.

So everybody is better off. Everybody is better off, including the final product is always better.

Gun Control Legislation

Q. Mr. President, did you get a chance to talk with lawmakers this weekend about the progress on guns? And are you confident that you might have something maybe even today or tomorrow?

The President. Well, I'm confident that they have done—that there's a serious, serious negotiation that's very close to coming to fruition. It depends on whether or not, particularly Republican, has the courage and stay—I'm sorry, I'm banging into your phone.

Q. No, you're fine.

The President. But look, I'm also very proud of some of the States, like right here in Delaware, in passing assault weapons bans, like I've been pushing, like I pushed the first time. And more States—we're up to 14 States, I think.

So, look, there's more than—that old saw—more than one way to skin a cat. But it would be better if we had better regulation of the sale of firearms nationally and nationally mandated.

Ukraine

Q. Mr. President, are you confident that Ukraine is going to become a member of the European Union? Are you pushing for that?

The President. I think that's likely—very likely to happen.

[*The President's daughter Ashley approached.*]

I know. That's my press secretary daughter. [*Laughter*] I promised——

National Economy/Prescription Drug Costs/Inflation

Q. [*Inaudible*]*—*are saying a recession is even more likely than ever.

The President. Not—the majority of them aren't saying that. Come on, don't make things up, okay? Now you're sounding like a Republican politician. I'm joking. That was a joke.

But all kidding aside—no, I don't think it is. I was talking to Larry Summers this morning. And there's nothing inevitable about a recession.

I—here's what I think we're going to be able to do. I think we're going to be able to get a change in Medicare and a reduction in the cost of insulin.

Insulin—if you know anybody who has type 2 diabetes or has a child who has it, they need the shots during the week. It could cost them up to a thousand bucks a week. And it may not cost more than \$35. And they're still going to make 3½ times what they invested in the insulin.

We also can move in a direction that we can provide for the tax—increasing the tax—taxes on those in the corporate area, as well as the individuals as it relates to Trump's tax cut, which is inflationary. You know, if you're going out and buying a yacht, it doesn't help the economy a whole lot.

And we also—I'm working with our team is—to put together, at the same time—my dear mother used to have an expression: "Out of everything lousy, something good will happen if you look hard enough for it." We have a chance here to make a fundamental turn toward renewable energy, electric vehicles, and not just electric vehicles, but across the board. And that's something we should be—my team is going to be sitting down with the CEOs of the major oil companies this week and try to get an explanation of how they justify making \$35 billion on the first quarter.

Gasoline Prices

Q. Are you planning to sit down with oil and gas CEOs, Mr. President?

The President. No.

Q. Why is that, sir?

The President. Because my team is going to do that.

Q. Okay. But you did that with retailers and logistics companies and consumer companies—

The President. Because I had it already done.

Q. How can they pump more if they're already at capacity?

The President. Well, they can, because what they're doing—first of all, what they've done is, they've cut back in the refining capacity. All this stuff you hear about and you guys have to report, that "Biden limited the amount of oil and"—they have 9,000 leases—they've got 9,000 leases on public land, and they should either use it or lose it. And that's number one.

Number two, the problem is, what they've done is, they've cut back on refining—on refining. And they say—because they don't want to get caught in a position where eventually they're going to move to alternative energy, renewable energy, and they don't want to get stuck. Well, guess what? There's a logical transition to be made here. And I want an explanation from them as to why they aren't refining more oil—refining more oil.

And—but at any rate.

White House aide. All right. Let's let him go. Thank you.

The President. Thank you.

White House aide. We're all set.

The President's Wedding Anniversary

Q. What did you get Dr. Biden for your anniversary, sir?

The President. It's a secret. *[Laughter]*

Global Minimum Tax

Q. Any topline goals for G-7 and G-20?

The President. Yes, one of the things that you may recall that I initiated was the international flat tax provision. And we got 140-some nations to sign onto it.

I'm coming.

[*The President's granddaughter Natalie approached.*]

This is my son Beau's oldest daughter. And she's trying to tell me, "Dad, Grandpop, Pop, get going. You promised me we'd walk."

Q. What did you guys do for Father's Day?

Natalie Biden. We had dinner.

Ashley Biden. All hung out together.

Natalie Biden. It was really fun, and we did puzzles.

The President's Wedding Anniversary

Q. What did you buy the First Lady for your anniversary?

The President. It's a secret.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:26 a.m. on the beach. In his remarks, he referred to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine; and former Secretary of the Treasury Lawrence H. Summers. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 21.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: Rehoboth Beach, DE.

Locations: Rehoboth Beach, DE.

Names: Biden, Ashley; Biden, Natalie P.; Summers, Lawrence H.; Trump, Donald J.; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: Commerce, international : Global minimum tax, multilateral agreement; Communications : News media :: Presidential interviews; Delaware : President's visits; Economy, national : Inflation; Education : Postsecondary education :: Federal student loans, pause on repayments; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies :: Promotion efforts; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies :: U.S. production; Energy : Domestic production, promotion efforts; Energy : Electric and hybrid vehicles, promotion efforts; Energy : Gasoline, oil, and natural gas costs; Health and medical care : Medicare and Medicaid; Health and medical care : Prescription drugs, affordability and costs; Labor issues : Unions :: Labor movement and organized labor; Law enforcement and crime : Gun control; Taxation : Tax relief; Ukraine : President; Ukraine : Relations with U.S.

DCPD Number: DCPD202200544.